

**CITY OF LAWRENCE
Common Council
December 29, 2025
Special Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilors Liz Masur, Carlos Jennings, Kristie Krone, Rick Wells, Lisa Chavis, Sherron Freeman, Tyrrell Giles and Betty Robinson

MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Zach Cramer

ALSO, BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Adkisson, Tim Berry, of Crowe, LLP and Scott Krapf, of Frost Brown Todd

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Perron, Terri Falker, Chief Bigsbee, and Greg Goodnight

STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Amber Riley

Council President Betty Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was administered, followed by a prayer given by Councilor Giles.

Roll call was taken. Eight (8) council members were present. President Robinson recognized there was a quorum. A quorum was confirmed.

Present:

- Councilor Giles
- Councilor Wells
- Councilor Chavis
- Councilor Robinson
- Councilor Jennings
- Councilor Freeman
- Councilor Krone
- Councilor Masur

The Council President announced an amendment to the agenda to include a **presentation following the public hearing**.

It was also recognized there were extra copies of the agenda located at the back of the room along with a sign-up sheet for comments from the citizens.

NEW BUSINESS: Proposal No. 12, 2025

An ordinance appropriating additional funds and amending the 2025 budget

The City Clerk read Proposal No. 12-2025 into the record.

Public Hearing – Opening

Unanimous consent was required to consider the ordinance on all readings the same evening.

A roll call vote was conducted, and **unanimous consent was granted**.

The public hearing was opened.

Daniel Rapp, 5718 Wallingwood Drive, addressed the Council.

Key points raised:

- Concerns about **financial transparency**, accuracy of posted monthly statements, and perceived inconsistencies between reported deficits and requested appropriations.
- Questioned changes in appropriation amounts from published notices to ordinance figures.
- Referenced historical budget practices and alleged patterns of requesting large amounts that later decrease.
- Requested interim December financial reports be made public.
- Raised concerns about after-the-fact contract approvals and recommended changes to voucher approval processes.
- Noted a pending public records request regarding a Redevelopment Commission spending plan.
- Questioned adequacy of public notice, stating the published notice did not clearly identify a public hearing.

The Council President extended additional time beyond the standard limit.
No further public comments were made.

The public hearing **remained open** at this point.

Administration Comments and Council Discussion

General Fund – Professional Services

- Administration explained the **\$102,000 request** was to cover a deficit in a professional services line item due to insufficient appropriations.
- Discussion occurred regarding discrepancies between **\$102,000** and **\$131,000** amounts referenced in public notices and invoices related to **Frost Brown Todd** legal services.
- Administration stated \$102,000 reflected confirmed invoices to date, with additional December charges potentially forthcoming.
- Legal counsel noted the published notice allowed flexibility and the final amount would be determined by the ordinance approved by Council.

EMS Personal Services

- A **\$150,000 shortfall** was identified in EMS personal services.
- Administration stated the deficit accumulated over the year.
- Council members questioned why the issue was not addressed earlier during the budget process.
- It was clarified that payroll obligations for 2025 required sufficient appropriations before year-end, despite payments occurring in early January.

Cumulative Capital Improvement / Debt Service

- A **\$198,000** request was discussed related to police and fire debt.
- A **\$378,000** request was discussed for **energy savings bond debt service**.
- Administration confirmed the bond payment obligation existed in 2025 but was **not included in the 2025 budget**, requiring an additional appropriation.
- Revenue from energy savings programs was available but had not yet been drawn down.
- It was explained that revenue would be accessed and applied, and the issue was related to appropriation authority rather than lack of funds.

Budget Process Clarifications

- Financial advisors explained that:
 - Additional appropriations for a given year must be completed by **December 31**.
 - End-of-year appropriations are common, particularly for overtime, debt service, and reconciliations.
 - Shortfall for one fiscal year cannot be resolved solely through the next year's budget.
 - Council members expressed concern about late timing and communication.
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Total Additional Appropriation

The **total additional appropriation request** referenced in discussion was approximately **\$828,000**, covering:

- Common Council professional services
 - EMS personal services
 - Cumulative capital improvement / debt service
 - Energy savings bond payments
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Status of Public Hearing

The public hearing **remained open** pending:

- Final clarification of legal services totals
- Any necessary amendments to Proposal No. 12-2025 prior to vote

Recess

A **10-minute recess** was declared to allow the administration to confirm figures.

The meeting reconvened at approximately **7:12 p.m.**

Recess Report / Administrative Confirmation

Upon reconvening, administration confirmed agreement to proceed with a **\$131,000 appropriation** for General Fund professional services.

The ordinance language and dollar amounts were updated accordingly.

Continuation of Proposal No. 12, 2025

Additional Appropriations and Budget Amendment

Council discussion continued regarding final figures for Proposal No. 12-2025. It was noted that:

- Any changes to the ordinance must be completed prior to a Council vote.
- Clarification was required regarding increasing the General Fund professional services appropriation from **\$102,000 to \$131,000**.
- Administration was asked to confirm agreement with the revised amount.

Public Hearing – Reopened / Rebuttal

The public hearing remained open.

Daniel Rapp was permitted a rebuttal (three minutes), during which he raised a procedural concern that the December 17 public notice did not explicitly state “public hearing,” asserting the hearing may not have been legally noticed.

Legal Counsel Response

Corporation Counsel responded that:

- The published notice stated taxpayers had the right to be heard.
- This language satisfied statutory notice requirements for an additional appropriation hearing.
- The public hearing and proceedings were **legally valid**.

Additional Council Clarification (Bond & Debt Items)

At the request of Council, the financial advisor returned to the podium to clarify:

- The energy savings bond payment was a **bond obligation**, not related to vendor performance.
- Revenue associated with energy savings exists and is eligible to be receipted by the City.
- The issue required additional appropriation because the debt service was **not included in the 2025 budget**, not due to lack of cash.

- Reserves and General Fund balances represent cash balances within a fund; the appropriation corrects compliance with State Board of Accounts requirements.
 - The **\$198,000 Cumulative Capital Development (CUMCAP)** debt service appropriation will be paid from existing fund reserves, with future tax levy replenishing the fund in 2026.
 - The appropriation does **not create a cash deficit** at year-end.
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Amendment to Proposal No. 12-2025

It was announced that Proposal No. 12-2025 was amended as follows:

- **Total additional appropriation increased to \$857,000**
 - **General Fund professional services increased to \$131,000**
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Motion – Approval of Amendment

Motion: To approve the amended version of Proposal No. 12, 2025

Moved by: Councilor Chavis

Seconded by: Councilor Jennings

Roll Call Vote:

- Giles – Yes
- Wells – Yes
- Chavis – Yes
- Robinson – Yes
- Jennings – Yes
- Freeman – Yes
- Krone – Yes
- Masur – Yes

Result: Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing – Closed

The public hearing was formally **closed**.

Motion – Approval of Proposal No. 12, 2025 (As Amended)

Motion: To approve Proposal No. 12, 2025, as amended

Moved by: Councilor Chavis

Seconded by: Councilor Giles

Roll Call Vote:

- Giles – Yes
- Wells – Yes
- Chavis – Yes
- Robinson – Yes
- Jennings – Yes
- Freeman – Yes
- Krone – Yes
- Masur – Yes

Result: Proposal No. 12, 2025 **approved unanimously.**

Special Presentation – Recognition of Counselor Lisa Chavis

Following Council action, a special presentation was held recognizing **Counselor Lisa Chavis** for her service.

Remarks were made by Council members and the mayor acknowledging:

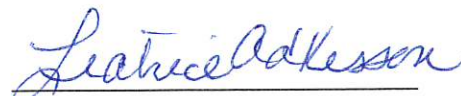
- Counselor Chavis's **10 years of service** to the City of Lawrence
 - Her leadership, integrity, and advocacy for constituents
 - Her historic role as the **first African American woman to serve as Council President**
 - Her service to the nation and commitment to community
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Proclamation

Mayor Deborah Whitfield presented a **formal proclamation** honoring Counselor Chavis, recognizing her elections in 2015, 2019, and 2023, her leadership roles, and her lasting impact on the City of Lawrence.

ADJOURNMENT: Councilor Robinson called for adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m., by President Robinson.


Betty Robinson, President


Leatrice Adkisson, Clerk

These minutes are not intended to be verbatim. They are a summary of discussions held, except for the motions.